

Total no. of spp. = 74	58	16	28	47	18	25	24	54	24	22
% of natives	78							85	79	59
% of introduced spp.		22						15	21	41
% of annuals			37					26	60	73
% of perennials			63					74	40	27
% of succulents				24				18	46	46
% of shrubs					34			44	17	0
% of sclerophylls						32		44	4	0

Note:— Symbols in brackets have been accorded half unit value in the construction of totals.

#### SUMMARY

Hamelin I., St. Alouarn I. and Seal I., off the south-western corner of the Australian continent, provide a striking example of the profound floristic modifications brought about by nesting seabirds. The flora of Hamelin I., where seabirds are marginal only, is a replica of that of the adjacent mainland and is co-dominated by 6-7 sclerophyllous shrubs. The similar soils of St. Alouarn I. are tunnelled by a vast population of petrels (*Puffinus assimilis* and *Petagodroma marina*) and none of the sclerophyllous shrubs survive. The vegetation is fairly homogeneous and dominated by two coprophilous, succulent-leaved shrubs.

Seal I. is occupied by burrowing birds (*Puffinus carneipes* and *Eudyptula minor*), four species of terns and one of gulls and no shrubs survive. Succulent native herbs and exotic annual grasses share dominance. The course of this floristic degradation from shrubs to herbs can be traced on parts of Hamelin I. which have been recently colonised by Silver Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*).

The comparatively negligible influence of exposure and the indigenous soil type in bringing about these changes is discussed and parallels drawn between seabird rookeries on the calcareous aeolianite of Western Australia and the acid granite of S.E. Australia. The merits of the three principal vegetation types as nesting habitats are discussed. New breeding stations are recorded for certain of the seabirds.

## ABLEPHARUS BUTLERI, A NEW SCINCID LIZARD FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By G. M. STORR, Western Australian Museum.

**Holotype:** R20615 (in Western Australian Museum) collected by G. M. Storr and R. E. Moreau on June 28, 1963.

**Type locality:** 4 miles east of Leonora, Western Australia; lat. 28°52' S, long. 121°23' E.

**Paratypes** (all in Western Australian Museum): R18297 and R20684 (Yamarna, 64 mi. N.E. of White Cliffs), R20665-8 (White Cliffs), R18298 (Laverton), R18339 (6 mi. N.E. of Mt. Morgans), R15686 and R18340-4 (6 mi. S.W. of Mt. Morgans), R21164 (Youanmi), R18324-5 (Menzies), R18307 (12 mi. E. of Zanthus).

**Diagnosis:** Belongs to subgenus *Morethia* Gray and is most like *Ablepharus lineocellatus* Duméril and Bihron, from which it is distinguishable by its uniform dorsal coloration and by its supraciliaries, which form a narrow straight-sided series of 6 scales, the first of which is largest; whereas in *lineocellatus* the last three of the 5 supraciliaries are enlarged and penetrate deeply between the supraciliaries.

**Description:** A terrestrial cryptozoic skink with well-developed limbs, each with five digits. Tail about 1½ times as long as head + body, which has a maximum length of 56 mm. Supraciliary ridge acute.

Supranasals small, widely separated by the large rostral, and occasionally fused to the still smaller postnasal. Prefrontals fairly large, usually separated, occasionally touching. Frontoparietals fused with each other and with the interparietal (in R20666 alone the interparietal is free). One pair of nuchals, rarely none. Supraoculars 4, the second largest, the first two in contact with frontal. Supraciliaries 6, rarely 5 or 7, the first largest, the boundary between them and the supraoculars being straight (not deeply indented as in *lineocellatus*). Upper labials usually 7, occasionally 8, the second last highest, the third last low and completely subocular. Ear lobules 1-4, mostly 2 or 3. 28 or 30 rows of mid-body scales. Subdigital lamellae sharply uncarinate, 20-27 under fourth toe.

The head and back is dark olive brown (whereas the head in *lineocellatus* is coppery brown and the back olive green with lines of small black spots or black-and-white ocelli). The tail is bright red in juveniles, usually becoming brown in adults. A silvery white streak runs back along the upper labials, across the ear, to immediately above the insertion of the arm, whence it occasionally extends to the groin. Above the white streak is a black streak, clearly defined below where it contacts the white, but vaguely edged above. Entire under surface whitish.

**Distribution:** Southern interior of Western Australia from Yarnam in the north-east and Youanmi in the north-west, south and east to Zanthus on the trans-Australian railway.

**Comments:** At first it was thought that *butleri* was a race of *lineocellatus*. However, the two are probably sympatric east of Kalbarrie. The Zanthus specimen was taken midway between two series of *lineocellatus* (from Karonie and Naretha, respectively 60 miles west and 75 miles east of Zanthus).

This form is named after Mr. W. H. Butler who collected several of the paratypes (and many other reptiles from north and east of the Goldfields).

## THYLACINUS AND SARCOPHILUS FROM THE NULLARBOR PLAIN

By D. L. COOK.

During a visit to Mundrabilla Station, Eucla Division, Western Australia, in January 1962, the author collected a number of canine teeth and an incomplete skull of *Sarcophilus harrisii* Boitard, 1841, together with numerous partly calcified seats (coprolites) of a carnivorous mammal, one of which subsequently proved to contain a tooth of *Thylacinus cynocephalus* Harris, 1808.

### DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL

#### *Thylacinus cynocephalus* Harris, 1808

A left M<sup>2</sup>. This was the smallest of 24 Western Australian and Tasmanian specimens measured and is therefore considered to be from a female. No occlusal wear could be detected, which indicates a sub-adult animal.